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This project, entitled “Learning vocabulary in context through explicit instruction improves language learning in the classroom” and written by Maria del Carmen Munoz Eljuri, is presented to the Graduate Program of Greensboro College. I recommend that it be accepted in a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts with a Major in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages.

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LEARNING VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT THROUGH EXPLICIT
INSTRUCTION IMPROVES LANGUAGE
LEARNING IN THE CLASSROOM

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The Graduate Program
of
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Of the Requirements of the Degree
Master of Arts in
Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

by
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Abstract

Vocabulary is the most important part of a language and without words we cannot communicate messages nor understand content. Developing communicative competence is crucial for English as a second language learners to become successful within and outside the school environment. Learners can get lost at school if English as a second language and mainstream teachers do not provide the appropriate material and strategies to help them acquire communicative competence. This paper explains the importance that vocabulary has in a language and how explicit instruction will facilitate vocabulary acquisition through content; it also addresses the importance of helping ESL students to increase their vocabulary size and presents activities and lesson plans to guide mainstream teachers in making the appropriate material according to students' knowledge, needs, and interests.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my husband Ellis and family who have encouraged and supported me throughout my graduation studies. To my grandchildren, for every time I missed playing with them.

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Chapter One: Introduction

When we refer to ELLs, we talk about learners who come to the American school system with lack of English language knowledge. At school, they receive formal instruction that helps them acquire vocabulary and content knowledge needed to succeed at school and in their future lives. Tips that teachers can use to explain how to recognize the meaning of new words while reading or listening, as well as exercises and examples for ESL learners, provide them with information needed to find the clues to help discover the meaning of a word within the context. The number of ELL students studying in the United States is growing every day; however, the majority are children born in the country whose immigrant parents speak their native language at home (Vasquez, Hansen, & Smith, 2013, p. 7).

There are some factors that impede ELLs acquisition of the English language and subject content when they enroll at schools. Some ELL learners have literacy in their L1, but do not have any knowledge of the English language while others have a low literacy rate or do not have any at all. Due to economic problems, many parents move from one state to another and their children stop going to school whereas other groups return to their home countries for short periods of time. Therefore, these children interrupt their formal education, and it is difficult for them to achieve literacy and develop English language proficiency.

According to the No Child Left Behind Act I, all children living in the United States will receive the same learning opportunities from kindergarten to twelfth grades. Thus, the ESL and mainstream teachers' job is to adjust the instruction and help their learners close the knowledge gap and achieve proficiency in the English language. The interrogation on what can teachers do to help ESL learners in the process of acquiring new vocabulary within the classroom environment needs to be present in the educators' minds.

Vocabulary is central to language, and it is of great significance to L2 learners. Words are the building blocks of a language since they label objects, actions, and ideas without which people cannot tell the intended message. Consequently, the prominent role of vocabulary knowledge in second or foreign language learning has been recognized by Coady and Huckin (1997) and other theorists and researchers in the field. However, teaching and learning new words based on students' needs and values have been "neglected because it was thought that vocabulary could simply be left to take care of itself" (DeCarrico, 2001, p. 285).

Therefore, the purpose of the thesis is to provide teachers with tools that benefit ESL learners to acquire new vocabulary in context and improve comprehension in the different areas at school. Teachers' awareness about their students' limited English language knowledge is the guide that creates situations and lessons based on the level of students' language proficiency, needs, and interests. Therefore, educators, before teaching ELLs, should be familiar with the pedagogical theories of language teaching and learning as well as understand that acquiring vocabulary in context rather than in isolation, increases students' comprehension.

The way the subject is introduced plays an important role and, in this sense, methodology is a significant tool to facilitate learning. The two types of vocabulary learning methods that are supported by different researchers are explicit or direct method, and implicit or indirect method. Nation (1990) supported that teaching direct vocabulary involves "a conscious effort ... to learn vocabulary either in context or in isolation" (p. 178), and described indirect vocabulary learning as the lexicon a person acquires while reading or listening.

ESL students are aware that the lack of vocabulary is the main obstacle they have to understand meaning; therefore, learning new words from explicit instruction removes the impediment that prevents learners from comprehending a text or communicating a message.

It is important to consider that in the classroom ESL students are learning both the English language and grade level content at the same time. However, if the word encountered is important enough to be made part of a learner's vocabulary, it is appropriate to provide "rich instruction" and a detailed explanation that goes beyond the meaning required for that specific word (Beck, McKeown, & Omanson, 1987, p. 149). As Nation (2001) stated, rich instruction can be used to emphasize high frequency words and words that are of particular importance to the learner. The primary goal of rich instruction is to "establish the word as an accessible vocabulary item" (Nation, 2001, p. 95).

Although there are arguments against using rich instruction with native speakers, the differences between native and L2 learners lead to consider the value of rich instruction with speakers of another languages. First, teaching the meaning of high frequency words must be considered when learning the English language because acquiring these words will enable L2 learners to comprehend a large percentage of written and spoken text (Nation, 2001). Second, if L2 learners are faced with input that is beyond their language proficiency, explicit vocabulary instruction or rich instruction can be useful to bridge the language gap. Third, explicit vocabulary teaching can speed up the language learning process (Nation, 2001).

When referring to vocabulary acquisition, students need to grasp that knowing a word means, not only to understand its meaning, but also knowing its use (Nation, 2001). It is also significant to comprehend that language learners face situations where they recognize a word while reading or listening, but they cannot produce it in speaking or writing situations. These experiences encouraged Gass (1989) to investigate six components of lexical knowledge: (a) knowing the various denotations of a word, (b) knowing the acceptable uses of a word, (c) knowing its syntactic properties, (d) knowing its underlying forms and derivations, (e) knowing the associations the word has with other words, and (f) knowing the connotations of

the word. Richards (1986) added a seventh component, which is the frequency of the occurrence of a word.

Nation (2013) stated that learning a word is a process that includes: recognizing it in written or oral situations, understanding it within a context, and using that lexicon when speaking or writing. Nation (2013) also distinguished between depth of vocabulary knowledge (how well a learner knows a word) and breadth of vocabulary knowledge (how many words a learner knows).

As reviewed, “Lexical competence is a central part of communicative competence, and teaching vocabulary is a central part of teaching a language” (DeCarrico, 2001, p. 297). The importance of teaching and learning vocabulary provides L2 learners with important tools that helps them to adjust to the new society and become successful in their future lives. Therefore, the acquisition of a great number and variety of vocabulary assist ESL students in developing communicative competence in the second language.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

In this chapter I will review literature related to the importance of learning vocabulary in context through explicit instruction to benefit ESL learners and will cover the following items: vocabulary acquisition in a second or foreign language, factors influencing vocabulary learning, and the importance of extensive reading to facilitate incidental vocabulary learning.

Vocabulary Acquisition in a Second Language

Vocabulary learning is seen as an integral area of language teaching “whether the language is first, second, or foreign” (DeCarrico, 2001, as cited in Celce-Murcia, 2001, p. 285). Words are important at the moment of communicating ideas and transmitting messages using simple sentences or more complicated structures, such as paragraphs, texts, or dissertations. Stephen Krashen’s Theory of Second Language Acquisition (2003) assumes that learners acquire language by understanding messages. Krashen (2003) stated that language acquisition is subconsciously learned, and we do not realize when we obtain new words because our conscious focuses on the message rather than in form. Therefore, the process involved in integrating new L2 words in a learner’s mental lexicon is assumed to be complex, happens as the learner is immersed in the new environment, and fills the need to use the target language. However, teachers use strategies and techniques to ease ESL instruction. Successful second language acquisition involves the development of multiple linguistic systems; nevertheless, in the history of second language acquisition as a field and in L2 instruction, grammar has been a primary focus of attention (Zimmerman, 1997).

Vocabulary is the heart of communication, and it is crucial at the moment of transferring messages. Sometimes lack of grammatical information impedes successful transmission of meaning; however, absence of vocabulary often obstructs the transmission of

meaning completely (Wilkins, 1972). Consider, for example, the two types of errors in the sentences “It *snow* in Chicago” and “It *nevs* in Chicago.” The grammar error in the first sentence (missing third person -s) does not impede transmission of the intended meaning whereas in the second example, the grammar error does impede meaning; in fact, the vocabulary error in the second sentence makes the sentence basically incomprehensible. As another example, consider the errors in the sentences with the intended meaning of “He wants a *spoon*.” “He want *spoon*” or “He wants a *fork*.” Again, the grammatical errors in the second sentence (missing third person -s and the omission of the indefinite article) distorts the intended meaning less than the vocabulary error in the third sentence (*fork* for *spoon*). These examples point out the importance of vocabulary knowledge in the transmission of meaning and in communication in general.

The significance of L2 vocabulary attributed by the students and their ability to function in an L2 environment are important facts to highlight. Survey results have suggested that students are particularly interested in receiving vocabulary instruction (Lapp, Flood, & Farnan, 2004) because it empowers the students to understand messages and communicate meaning. In addition, Arnaud and Savingnon (1997) stated that L2 learners benefit from explicit idiomatic expression instruction, which needs to be taught from the beginning because idiomatic expressions are frequently used. Explicit teaching promotes competence in their students’ communication and is an important part to help students understand the target language and become successful academically (Kame’eniui & Bauman, 2012). The significance of vocabulary in second language acquisition is also sustained by the relationship between vocabulary and how grammatical knowledge is stored in the minds of learners and language users; however, language learners are more interested in communicating messages rather than learning the rules of the language (Brown & Hanlon, 1970; Brown, Cazden, & Ferguson, 1977 as cited in Krashen, 1981). For instance, ESL Spanish speaking students tend

to use the adjective after the noun it modifies, transferring their L1 mental grammar to the new language; therefore, it is common to hear or read statements, such as “My brother *older* is my best friend” instead of “My *older* brother is my best friend” or “They are *goods* students” instead of “They are *good* students.” This last error happens because the adjectives in Spanish have singular and plural forms (Nation, 2001).

Sinclair (1987, as cited in Nation, 2013) suggested that much of what we refer to as grammar knowledge actually resides at the lexical level connections between words and groups of words developed over time and based on large amounts of language exposure. In the past, teaching a language was centered in teaching grammar and phonology and “there has been little emphasis placed on the acquisition of vocabulary” (Zimmerman, 1997, p. 17). Mainstream and ESL teachers have not tried to close the vocabulary knowledge gap that ESL learners have. Many L2 instructional programs continue to emphasize grammar as their most important tool to teach a language, and this emphasis seems to correspond to the general perspective on language acquisition: “acquisition = grammar + other types of competence”; however, an alternative perspective would be that “acquisition = vocabulary + other types of competence” (Zimmerman, 1997, p. 19).

Sökmen (1997, as cited in Nation, 2013) explained the importance of studying “several key principles of explicit learning that can help guide teachers in deciding basic questions of what to teach and how to teach (p. 285)” which assists instructors to apply strategies that help pupils to acquire lexis and comprehend content.

Researchers have estimated that teaching between 2,000 and 3,000 high frequency words helps L2 learners understand most of the information in the texts, infer the meaning of low frequency words, and build up vocabulary knowledge. The use of extensive readings provides numerous encounters of high frequency words, facilitating their recognition, memorization, and use to transmit messages.

How much vocabulary do ESL learners need?

The amount of words an ESL student needs to communicate within the school is a complex question to answer. According to Schmitt (2000), there are three ways of addressing this: the first one is to find the number of words the target language has; the second way is to know the amount of lexicon a native speaking student knows, and the third one is to learn the number of words an ESL student needs to communicate within the school environment. All these refer to vocabulary knowledge and should not be assumed that if a language learner has sufficient vocabulary then the rest is easy. Vocabulary knowledge is only one component of language skills, such as reading and speaking, but is one of the most important components that helps a person communicate (Nation, 1993).

When referring to the amount of words the English language has, and in order to find the answer, we can refer to the Oxford English Dictionary where more than 600,000 words are found (Folse, 2004). However, it is important to understand that languages are constantly changing, and in the dictionary, there are words that are in use, many are new, and others are not in use anymore (Merriam-Western, 2019).

Native speaking students, starting at the age of three, are estimated to add around 1,000- word families a year to their vocabulary knowledge, which means that a five-year-old beginning school has a vocabulary of around 3,000 to 4,000-word families while a university graduate has a vocabulary of around 20,000-word families (Biemiller & Slonim, 2001 as cited in Nation, 2013). However, these figures exclude proper names, compound words, abbreviations, and foreign words. Therefore, English learners have a larger vocabulary gap when compared with the lexis native speakers have at the same age although there is a large number of second language learners that achieve vocabulary sizes similar to those of educated native speakers, but it is not the norm (Nation, 2013).

The third concern refers to the number of words ESL students need to know in order to communicate in the way language users do. Findings are that ESL students do not need a great amount of language in order to understand content. With the knowledge of 2,000 words, a learner recognizes 80% of the words in a text which means that one word in every five (approximately two words in every line) are unknown (Nation, 2001). However, research done by Laufer (1989) suggested that 95% coverage is sufficient to allow reasonable comprehension of a text. A larger vocabulary size is better.

Clearly, the learner needs to know between 2,000 and 3,000 high frequency words of the language. These are an immediate high priority, and there is little sense in focusing on other vocabulary until these are well learned. Nation (1990) argued that after these high frequency words are learned, the next step for the teacher is to help learners develop strategies to comprehend, learn, and use the low frequency words of the language. Nation (2001) stated that because of the poor coverage that low frequency words give; it is not worth spending class time on actually teaching these words. It is more efficient to spend class time on different strategies to teach vocabulary which will be explained in detail later. At this point it is important to emphasize that the teacher's target is to help learners gain control of important strategies that lead ESL learners to become independent learners.

Factors Influencing Vocabulary Learning

Introducing a subject to teach within the classroom is a difficult task teachers face every day; therefore, choosing the right methodology plays an important role in order to facilitate language learning. In this regard, the use of explicit and implicit methods has helped vocabulary acquisition and improved language comprehension and communication (Schmitt, 2012). Explicit instruction can support the development of English language skills and especially vocabulary. Lightbown and Spada (1999) stated that older and more advanced

learners benefit from intentional instruction more than younger learners. Zimmerman (1997) showed that students who received vocabulary interactive instruction performed better than the ones did not and that learners increased their vocabulary knowledge effectively with explicit, de-contextualized study of vocabulary. The learning of a particular word through speaking is likely to occur when interactive activities are used to improve a particular vocabulary (Nation, 2001). The same is true when learning vocabulary through listening (Hulstijn, 2001). Coady and Huckin (1997) used explicit instruction to help learners with 3,000 high-frequency words, and after the words became sight vocabulary, the students read better. Incidental vocabulary learning is sometimes seen as antithetical to the explicit teaching of vocabulary (Kelly, 1990 as cited in Nation 2013). Despite the arguments that support explicit lexical instruction, a considerable number of studies also demonstrated that reading, particularly extensive reading, can lead to vocabulary development (Taguchi, Takayasu-Maass, & Gorsuch, 2004); therefore, both forms of vocabulary acquisition are beneficial for ESL and native language speakers.

Psycholinguistics.

Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams (2003) stated that “to understand our humanity, one must understand the nature of language that makes us human” (p. 3) and the study of human language comprehension, production, and acquisition is a branch of linguistics called psycholinguistics. Hatch (1993) defined psycholinguistics as “an interdisciplinary field of study in which the goals are to understand how people acquire language, how they use it to speak and understand one another, and how it is represented and processed in the brain” (p. 1). From a psycholinguistics point of view the knowledge of language represented in a person’s brain which provides a system for pairing sound and meaning is known as linguistic competence. The use of such knowledge in the actual production and comprehension of

sentences is known as linguistic performance. Linguistic competence and performance, and the way a word of sentence is stored in memory, processed, and combined with other sentences to form conversations has been a constant concern from scientists (Gernsbacher, 1994).

In the second language acquisition field of study, psycholinguistics is a useful tool which can be used by teachers in order to understand how the brain works at acquiring the language (Krashen, 1981). For instance, the representation of language and its function in the brain, that is to say, its lateralization, is located in one of the two hemispheres of the cerebral cortex. For the vast majority of people, 60% to 70% of the language is lateralized and it is located in the left hemisphere ; however, in some people language is lateralized in the right hemisphere, and in a small percentage of people language is not lateralized at all, but seems to be represented in both hemispheres (Obler & Gjerlos, 1999). The hemisphere of localization is related to handedness, with left-handed people being more likely to have language lateralization in the right hemisphere (Caramazza & Badecker, 1990). Paul Broca (1865) first related language to the left side of the brain when he noted that damage to the front part of the left hemisphere now called Broca's area resulted in a loss of speech while damage to the right side did not (Obler & Gjerlow, 1999). Broca's area is responsible of producing language. Carl Wernicke (1874) also used studies of autopsies to describe another type of aphasia that resulted from lesions in the back portion of the left hemisphere now called Wernicke's area. Unlike Broca's patients, Wernicke's patients spoke fluently and with good pronunciation, but with many lexical errors and a difficulty in comprehension (Obler, & Gjerlow, 1999). Broca's and Wernicke's area are the two main regions of the cortex of the brain related to language processing (Zurif, Swinney, & Fodor, 1991). In regard to second language acquisition, it is widely believed that adults cannot learn a second language to the same degree that children learn their first language, but still linguistic competence can be attained (Krashen, 1982).

Although, how children learn to speak is not perfectly understood, most explanations involve both the observation that children copy what they hear, and that human beings have a natural aptitude for understanding grammar. According to Noam Chomsky (1957), children usually learn the sounds and vocabulary of their native language through imitation, and grammar is not taught explicitly because the human brain has an innate capacity to learn the language. For instance, children may overgeneralize grammatical rules and say, “I *goed* to the park” (meaning *went*), which suggests they assumed the preterit grammatical rule (Obler & Gjerlow, 1999). It is important to point out that second language learners pass through some of the same stages, including overgeneralization, as children learning their native language (Krashen, 1981). In this situation, L2 would benefit from explicit teaching to avoid making these mistakes even though people rarely become as fluent in a second language as in their native tongue because “barriers to new knowledge reside not only in linguistic transfer, but in negative transfer of cultural knowledge as well” (Moyer, 2004, p. 2).

Lennenberg (1967) considered the earliest years of childhood as a critical period after which the brain loses much of its ability for assimilating new languages (as cited in Moyer, 2004). Most of the traditional methods for learning a second language involve some systematic approach to the analysis and comprehension of grammar as well as to the memorization of vocabulary. The cognitive approach, increasingly favored by experts in language acquisition, emphasizes conversation, immersion, and other techniques intended to simulate the environment in which children acquired their native language (Odlin, 1998).

According to MacWhinney (1992), second language learners’ performance differs from L1 learners’ performance because there are many factors that contribute to the failure of L2 adult speakers to speak the second language in the way native speakers do. The younger the person is, the more likely he/she is to achieve native competence. Schmitt (2000) stated that variables, such as “L1, age, amount of exposure, motivation, and culture” influences in

the incomplete achievement of the new language in adult learners (p. 116). Therefore, first language influence indicates low acquisition of L2, and “it can be eliminated or at least reduced by natural intake and language use” (Taylor, 1975 as cited in Krashen, 1981, p. 67)” which means that L1 influence disappears when the learner acquires proficiency in the new language.

According to Gass and Selinker (2001), the acquisition of L2 lexicon implies the construction of the four components of the content of the word: the phonological, the semantic, the syntactic, and the morphological component of a word. Kellerman and Sharwood (1996) stated that the L1 influences more than other factors in the acquisition of the L2 lexicon, and the crosslinguistic influence conditions the learner's perception and accessibility of L2 words in the phonological and the semantic domain as well.

Lexicon.

According to Sowa (1989), lexicon is the use of the language to express knowledge. However, since every language has its own vocabulary and grammatical structure, the concepts expressed reflect the user experiences, ideas, and interests. In other words, meaning of one word or expression in English can have another connotation in the Spanish language; “First language influence appears to be strongest in complex word order and word-for-word translations of phrases” (Krashen, 1981, p. 65). For instance, in the United States “Where are you from? Means where the person was born or where the person actually lives, whereas in Spanish asking where a person is from refers to where the person was born. When writing a text, a simple spell checker can catch many errors with nothing but a list of words and corrections can be made without considering the context that word is used.

Krashen (1981) stated that “language influence may therefore be an indication of low acquisition” (p. 67), meaning that the lack of L1 knowledge influences learners in making

several errors. In the English language for example, there are words that are pronounced in the same way, and their use depends on the context, such as in the case of *all* and *awl*. *It is correct to say* “*All* students are present” and not “*Awl* students are present.” The same can be applied when using words that have similar meanings; for instance, in order to distinguish *infer* from *imply*, the context of the sentence must contain enough information to enable a language processor to recognize the context, the topic, and the logical inferences necessary to determine what was being inferred or implied (Gass & Selinker, 2001).

Lexicon is defined as “the total stock of morphemes in a language” or the vocabulary knowledge a person has (Merriman-Webster.com 2020). All human beings are exposed to language from birth and the high frequency exposure influences how children learn the sounds and the meaning of words, and then they communicate using simple utterances first, short sentences next, to finally acquire the right structure of the language (Brown, 1973 as cited in Krashen, 1981). The language information memorized and stored in the brain is known as mental grammar (Nordquist, 2020). According to Laufer (1992), native speakers can recognize a word of their language in two hundred milliseconds or less and can reject a non-word sound sequence in about half a second; therefore, when ESL students communicate messages, teachers, who are native speakers, notice immediately when a word is mispronounced or misspelled as well as the incorrect use of syntax. Although there is a great amount of vocabulary available to any speaker of a language, people only use part of it (Schmitt, 2012).

The familiarity effect illustrates a clear difference between the mental lexicon and a dictionary; looking up words in a dictionary takes longer to find a less commonly used word, whereas in the mental lexicon familiar words are more rapidly access (Nordquist, 2020). Lightbown and Spada (1999) found that people respond faster to homographs than to non-homographs. That is, words that have more than one meaning are recognized slightly faster

(*bear* is an animal, or *bear* meaning to tolerate something) than equally familiar words like *neighbor* that has only one meaning. This implies that homographs are often represented in a variety of meanings.

Inflectional and derivational morphology play an important role when referring to word meaning. Salaberry and Shirai (2002) mentioned that inflections are under the control of syntax, derivations are not. Regular inflections affix always appear outside derivational affixes e.g. boyshoods, not boyhoods. In English, words can have several derivational affixes, but only one inflectional affix (Salaberry & Shirai (2002)). The importance of mental lexicon is clearly differentiated from print dictionaries due to the fact that words are stored in separate compartments in the mind and coexist in an elaborate network of associations (Schmitt, 2012). Carter (1987) stated that words are not only associated with meanings, they are associated with each other, and when a word is used, the activation in the mental lexicon spreads over this network of associations.

Extensive reading.

Reading has always been a source of acquiring knowledge and achieving vocabulary (Harmon & Wood, 2008 as cited in Debitta et al., 2018). The importance of extensive reading for native speakers and second language learners is relevant because ER promotes vocabulary achievement in the English language (Debitta et al., 2018). At schools, graded books are used in order to promote vocabulary development and the familiarization of the rules of grammar of the English language (Day & Bamford, 1998; Krashen, 1995 as cited in Debitta et al., 2018). When ESL learners read, they face two types of vocabulary, words that they recognize and remember when they see them, and words that they use when writing and speaking (Schmitt, 2012). Extensive reading promotes memorization of these lexicon which increase language learners the use of vocabulary knowledge, and “continue to improve in their second

language without classes, without teachers, without study, and even without people to converse with” (Krashen, 1993, p. 84).

Over the years, educators have promoted the incursion of extensive reading in the classrooms in order to benefit students from incidental vocabulary learning because reading has been claimed as a fruitful method to improving word power, and a way of acquiring new vocabulary; however, “the claim that ER alone is sufficient for vocabulary learning has been challenged” (Day & Bamford, 1998; Waring & Nation, 2004 as cited in Debitta et al., 2018, p. 350). Schmitt (2012) advised that when a person starts reading, explicit study is important to facilitate comprehension because low frequency words are present while reading and writing.

Krashen (1993) stated that “Free voluntary reading may be the most powerful tool we have in language education” (p. 15); therefore, language learners need to read as much as possible, choose what they want to read, select a variety of reading material on a wide range of topics, and pick easy reading material which enable learners to get in touch with enjoyable and easy material.

Krashen (1993, as cited in Debitta et al., 2018) stated that “Reading is good for you. Research supports a stronger conclusion; however, reading is the only way we become good readers, develop a good writing style, an adequate vocabulary, advanced grammar, and the only way we become good spellers” (p. 352). This statement supports the advantage of extensive reading in vocabulary acquisition, and in the development of the different language skills, which are needed to become proficient in the English language. Extensive reading increases knowledge and presents numerous opportunities to encounter unknown words which can be easily inferred from meaning (Schmitt, 2012). Extensive Reading helps develop reader’s fluency in low ESL students and help them become independent learners, which is the objective of current education (Taguchi et al., 2004).

ESL students who read more improve their cultural knowledge, as well as the writing, vocabulary, spelling, and grammar structure of the language (Bland & Lütge, 2014). Consequently, their language proficiency improves, understand content, do better at school, and are able to interact with their peers and teachers.

In conclusion, vocabulary acquisition is particularly important at the moment of learning a new language, teachers' job is to facilitate language learning by providing ESL learners with the right strategies that enables acquire the English language easily. There are many strategies that can be used in order to develop a language; however, as Krashen (2003) stated "Free voluntary reading may be the most powerful tool we have in language education ... [because it impacts on] reading comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, and writing (p. 15)".

Learning a language through reading facilitates vocabulary acquisition and learning new knowledge; when reading, the reader is exposed to high frequency words that are easily recognized, understood, and used. As the reading takes place, the reader will encounter unknown or low frequency words which meaning can be inferred from content. How to acquire vocabulary while reading, through explicit and implicit learning is the objective of this project.

Chapter Three: Project Design

This research focuses on how learning vocabulary in context through explicit instruction improves language learning in the classrooms. I chose this topic because vocabulary is central to languages and the lack of word knowledge impedes a person in communicating with others (Wilkins, 1972). The purpose is to provide mainstream and ESL teachers with several tips and strategies that can be used in the classroom in order to help L2 learners in the process of language acquisition.

English-language learners arrive in the United States with different levels of background knowledge: some are literate in their first language, others have basic English language skills, many have no literacy, others do not know English, and the majority of students belong to families whose parents speak their native language at home (Vasquez, Hansen, & Smith, 2013). Therefore, being aware of students' literacy, English knowledge, interests, and needs provides the data that instructors can use when planning a lesson or preparing listening, reading, writing or speaking exercises.

I work as a substitute teacher, and I have had the opportunity to witness that teachers do not do much in the way of providing easy material to help their L2 learners either to understand content or to learn the new language. Consequently, my goal is to offer instructors friendly material and clues that can be used in the classrooms in order to aid L2 learners in both gaining vocabulary and understanding meaning.

Since vocabulary is an important component of language, it is relevant that teachers use materials that keeps L2 learners motivated in the process of learning so that they understand content, enjoy the process, and, unconsciously acquire new lexicon when reading while avoiding frustration (Krashen, 1993). Exposure to language is one factor that facilitates vocabulary acquisition, and extensive reading is an important tool to use because it gives

scholars the opportunity to encounter those high frequency words that are crucial for understanding meaning. For instance, from grades fourth to eighth, the words *the*, *of*, *and*, *to*, and *a* cover twenty percent of the text and are immediately recognized (Gunning, 2011). When school teachers provide ESL students with graded books to support knowledge, the material ought to be easy at the beginning, and the difficulty should only increase as they improve their language. Consequently, reading helps students build vocabulary, improve comprehension, and increase communicative competence in the different areas of knowledge (Krashen, 1993).

Explicit vocabulary learning assists students when meeting unknown words, and it enables them to understand content immediately, facilitating incidental vocabulary learning (Debitta et al., 2018); however, inferring vocabulary from context might take longer because guessing the right meaning of a word is more difficult to attain. Sokmen (1997) opined that is almost impossible for instructors to teach explicit vocabulary and that students would benefit more from independent learning (as cited in Debitta et al., 2018). Therefore, teachers' job is to teach ESL learners the right strategies for them to use so that L2 students become independent learners.

Reading is an important tool that facilitates language learning. L2 learners who read frequently are exposed to a variety of vocabulary, they write better, and they know more (Krashen 1993). Thus, constant exposure to language through reading or listening enables ESL students not only to receive information that increases content knowledge and language jargon but also that improves the production of written and spoken skills. Reading drives learners' minds to connect the new information with their background knowledge, facilitating word recognition, memorization, and use, as well as helping them to infer the meaning of unfamiliar words and thereby increase content knowledge.

In the next chapter, strategies and tips that enable mainstream and ESL teachers better to help their students in learning vocabulary, content, and interact at school and outside will be provided. These strategies will cultivate teachers' abilities to write lesson plans focusing on students' English and general knowledge, which will also improve students' interaction with the teacher and class material.

Chapter Four: The Project

The purpose of this chapter is to provide tips and strategies to mainstream and ESL teachers to use in their classrooms when teaching students how to gain vocabulary and content knowledge through extensive reading, through which either explicit or incidental vocabulary learning can take place.

The Use of Strategies

Vocabulary learning strategies are an important part of the language learning, which ESL students need to know when learning the English language. Strategies provide learners with the tools to facilitate the process of acquiring the English language, which increases content knowledge in the classrooms, and helps L2 students become actively involved in the process of learning the new language. Nation (2013) presented reliable information in promoting strategies to use reliable information regarding how these strategies foster language learning and Nation also explained that it is important to choose the right strategy, know how they work, and train learners how to use them in order to “increase the efficiency and effectiveness of vocabulary learning, and vocabulary use” (p. 326); therefore, strategies should be taught as the situation requires.

Nation (2013) noted that one of the conditions related to success in vocabulary acquisition is the devotion of time to learning those strategies because their successful use depends on when and how well learners can use a strategy to learn the new lexicon. Many strategies can be used at the same time; however, being aware of when to switch from one strategy to another to facilitate vocabulary learning is crucial, and “Self-motivation [,] an essential component of autonomy, is central to continued effective vocabulary learning” as

well (Nation, 2001, p. 328). Nation (2013) referred to the following steps that facilitate vocabulary acquisition:

- planning vocabulary knowledge,
- finding information about words,
- establishing vocabulary knowledge,
- enriching knowledge,
- training learners in strategy choice and use,
- training learners in strategy use, and
- integrating strategies. (pp. 329-342)

The effectiveness of a strategy depends on factors, such as “proficiency level, L1 and culture of students, their motivation and purposes for learning the L2, the task and text being used, and the nature of the L2 itself” (Schmitt, 2012, p. 133). Therefore, each learner’s knowledge, interest, and needs have an influence on vocabulary acquisition and language development.

Extensive Reading: Explicit or Incidental Learning

Nation (2013) favored the idea that intentional and incidental vocabulary learning complement each other, “giving [language learners] the opportunities to learn from message-focused activities and from direct study of language items” (p. 348). Mondria (2003) conducted research on acquiring vocabulary while reading, and part of the research focused on inferring vocabulary meaning from context; another included inferring and verifying; and another focus centered on inferring, verifying, and memorizing words. Later, a translation test was provided, and the result was “6% retention for inferring, a further 9% as a result of

verifying (being told the right answer), and a further 32% as a result of a chance to memorize” (as cited in Nation, 2013, p. 349). These numbers showed that memorizing words increases the opportunity to understand content; however, verifying, and inferring word meaning from content also increases vocabulary knowledge.

Guessing words from meaning is a task that involves strategy knowledge, and for second language learners practicing strategies that focus on guessing words meaning from context, is crucial; however, “95% of the running words [in the text] need to be already familiar to the learners for this to happen” (Liu & Nation, 1985 as cited in Nation, 2013, p. 352). In such cases, teachers are required to know their students’ word knowledge so that the material provided fits each student’s needs. Identifying individual reading levels gives the opportunity to provide books appropriate for the learner, raising the percentage of “text coverage and chances of guessing, or [increase] vocabulary size and the chances of guessing could be made” (Nation 2013, p. 352); hence, successful guessing is linked to students’ background knowledge.

The strategies that language learners can use are divided in two classes: “(1) strategies that are useful for the initially discovery of a word’s meaning, and (2) those useful for remembering that word once it has been introduced” (Schmitt, 2012, p. 135). Schmitt (2012) also referred to a group of strategies that are important to consider: “determination strategies, social strategies, memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and metacognitive strategies” (Schmitt, 2012, p. 135-136). In the present project special attention is given to determination strategies, which refer to “guessing from one’s structural knowledge of a language, guessing from an L1 cognate, guessing from context, or using reference-materials” (Schmitt, 2012, p. 135). Therefore, providing graded material and recognizing language relationship are important in order for ESL students to succeed.

Implications for Teachers

Mainstream and ESL teachers play an important role in presenting the appropriate material for students to use, and through it acquire new vocabulary and improve language knowledge. Schmitt (2012) stated that strategy training is not beneficial for students unless teachers present the strategy immediately before a particular activity that focuses on acquiring new words or recycling them. For instance, if the instructor needs students to recognize cognates in a particular topic, educators should explain the meaning of the word cognate, and then look for those words when reading. Therefore, it is important that ESL students know the strategies to use before facing new vocabulary (technical vocabulary) when reading content in the different subjects at school.

When learning a new language, teaching the high frequency words provides the learner with the possibility to understand the language. According to Schonell, Meddleton, and Shaw (1956, as cited in Schmitt, 2012), 2,000 words are needed to communicate orally in the English language. Therefore, high frequency words “should be taught as quickly as possible, because they open the door of further learning” (Schmitt, 2012, p. 137). When L2s are first exposed to the former language, they are highly motivated and eager to learn; consequently, teachers need to take advantage of this situation and teach as much vocabulary as possible. For second language learners, the words in a text need to be adapted to their knowledge level (Nation, 2013).

High frequency words.

High frequency words are important to learn because they are utilized so frequently in communication when using the language. At school, in addition to the General Service List of English Words, written by Michael West in 1953, the Academic Word List needs to be taught so that learners can understand the content in the different subject areas. Nation (2007

as cited in Nation, 2013, 25) stated that “In a well-balanced course, just one-quarter of the time should be spent on deliberate study ... [and] only a small portion should involve deliberate teaching” because most of the vocabulary learning comes from implicit learning during reading or listening (Nation, 2013, p. 25). ESL students’ goal is to continue learning and reach around 3,000 to 4,000 high frequency words, plus proper nouns, so that they can read “98% of coverage of novels, films, and newspapers, [and school material]” facilitating guessing the meaning of unknown words while reading (Nation, 2013, p. 26).

Based on word-frequency, different word lists have been generated to provide teachers and students with the word knowledge needed to communicate in the English language. Folse (2004) stated that teachers need to pay attention to the words generated in the Dolch List (220 sight words, mostly function words, for K-3 grades), the General Service List (2,000 words), University Word List (808 word found in academic texts), and the Academic Word List (570 word families found in different academic text materials) to help learners acquire the English language. Therefore, elementary, middle, and high school mainstream and ESL teachers must focus their teaching on the Dolch List, the Academic Word List, and the relevant vocabulary of each subject area so that ESL students learn the vocabulary that is relevant for communication and understanding while interacting in the new language.

Folse (2004) stated that teachers do not have to rely only on word lists because there are numerous strategies than can be used in order to improve vocabulary learning/teaching; however, students need to have access to the list of high-frequency words and decide “what vocabulary to focus on and where to find this vocabulary” (Baker, 2007 as cited in Nation, 2013, p. 329).

The Academic Word List comes from Coxhead (2000) and is intended to guide teachers and students in selecting the most important words required to understand the subjects. In the Academic Work List each word has a number which “indicates the sublist of

the *Academic Word List*. For example, *abandon* and its family members are in Sublist 8 of the *Academic Word List*. Sublist 1 contains the most frequent words and Sublist 10 the least frequent” (Nation, 2013, p. 598).

High frequency words.

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Knowing a word.

The process of language acquisition is related to word meaning and grammatical/morphological knowledge (Schmitt, 2012). Native and language learners tend to learn the meaning of the word easily, but understanding the word’s features takes longer time (Carey, 1978 as cited in Schmitt, 2012). Once learners acquire the concept of a word, they can learn its meanings from exposure and semantic boundaries (Schmitt, 2012). For ESL learners, the process is easier “to acquire the core meaning sense of a word before more figurative senses, and that much L1 meaning information is transferred over to the L2” (Schmitt, 2012, p. 124).

Schmitt (2012) held that native and ESL students can learn the inflections and derivations of a word when they identify their base form, and many words will be recognized;

however, it is important to signal out that “even native speakers do not have full mastery over morphology until at least high school” (Nagy, Diakidoy, & Anderson, 1993 as cited in Schmitt, 2012, p. 126). Accordingly, when ESLs are reading a text, they need to be able to recognize and guess the meaning of a variety of words that have affixes and prefixes, and infer the meaning of compound words as well. Sonaiya (1991 as cited in Schmitt, 2012) indicated that “this is one of the most difficult and important aspects of learning new words, and that it is a continuous process” (p. 125).

Kame’enui and Baurmann (2012) declared that “most of the words in the English language have been created through morphological processes” (p. 117) and a study done by Nagy and Anderson (1984 as cited in Kame’enui & Baurmann, 2012) supported that about 60% of the English words come from Latin and Greek roots and affixes. This knowledge allows students to understand many of the unknown words, and helps them become independent; especially, intermediate and advanced learners (Anglin, 1993, Bowers & Kirby, 2010 as cited in Kame’enui & Baurmann, 2012). Different studies suggest that, even though there are many ESL students with different backgrounds, explicit instruction favors Spanish speakers “on identifying cognates---words that have similar spellings, meanings, and pronunciation in two languages” (Lubliner & Grisham, in press as cited in Kame’enui & Baurmann, 2012, p. 316). For example, *especial* and *special* come from Latin and both words have the same meaning and similar pronunciation. Therefore, many English words whose roots, prefix, and suffix come from Latin will be easily recognized by L1 Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, French, or Romanian language learners.

As a result, mainstream teachers need to explain how prefix and suffix work, in order to reinforce students’ knowledge and facilitate vocabulary acquisition when guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words. For instance, when students know the meaning of *-ful* and the base of the word, to understand the meaning of words such as *careful* or *painful* will be easy.

For instance, *-ful* means *-oso/a* in Spanish, and if a L2 language learner knows the meaning of the base word and its suffix, he/she will easily guess the meaning of *careful* = *cuidadoso* (cuidar+oso). Thus, the teachers' job is to reinforce morphological knowledge whenever is needed, and drive their pupils to use their knowledge and become independent learners. Laufer (1997 as cited in Schmitt, 2012) suggested that "if derivational affixes are transparent then learning is facilitated (p. 61)."

Guessing words from context.

Nation (2013) stated that knowing a word is not only knowing its form and different meanings but also the data presented within the context gives important information "in the receptive and productive use of the word" (p. 359). The meaning of a word depends where the unknown word is located and the extra information given in the sentence clarifies the meaning of that utterance; therefore, "word meanings are context sensitive" (Nation, 2013, p. 359).

When ESL learners have a great amount of vocabulary knowledge, guessing from context is a positive strategy to use because their understanding is more effective, and inferring the meaning from context is an easy task to acquire (Nation, 2013). When an unknown word is in the middle of a sentence and the L2 student recognizes the rest of the utterances "most of the clues for guessing word meanings from context will come in the immediate context, that is, within the same sentence as the unknown word" (Nation, 2013, p. 364). Likewise, Laufer and Sim (1985a as cited in Nation, 2013) "argued that guessing a word from context should not be focused on until learners have a sufficiently large vocabulary to support such guessing (p. 365)."

Other factors that facilitate guessing words from context are: learners' previous knowledge of the material they are reading, similarities between L1 and L2 languages,

captioned vision when listening and reading while watching a movie, and intensive reading (Neuman & Koshinen, 1992 as cited in Nation, 2013). Translation is another strategy that lower and higher language learners have benefited from, especially when a word is an impediment to understand the content of a text and “learners were able to learn L2 words when presented with their translations” (Prince, 1995 as cited in False, 2004, p. 75).

According to Hulstijn (1992 as cited in Folse, 2004), L2 learners are more likely to remember a word when they guessed the meaning by themselves. Similarly, L2 learners could remember more words acquired from context when they reread the text, and some exercises followed that reading (Wesche & Paribakht, 1994 as cited in Folse, 2004).

Consequently, when mainstream and ESL teachers select reading materials for their L2 learners, educators need to consider their students’ vocabulary proficiency level and reading skills so that L2 learners can comprehend most of the material and succeed when guessing new words from context. It is also important to provide instruction in the use of the context clues to students in order for them to become successful language learners.

Dictionaries: bilingual, monolingual, Thesaurus, or E-dictionaries.

Language learners, who enjoy reading, soon find out that the “their lack of vocabulary knowledge in that language results in serious comprehension problems” (Folse, 2004, p. 110) which not only interferes with acquiring knowledge from reading, but also becomes the main obstacle in mastering the second language (Meara, 1980 as cited in Folse, 2004). Therefore, students would choose to skip the unknown word, guess the meaning from context, or look up the word in a dictionary to understand content when reading (False, 2004). If learners decide to use a dictionary, they may choose a bilingual dictionary (English-Spanish or English-German), a monolingual dictionary (English-English), Thesaurus, or internet resources to find the meaning of words.

Though many L2 teachers do not favor the use of bilingual dictionaries because they claim that ESL students have to use the English language since the beginning, and other teachers let learners use them because there are many studies that support bilingual dictionaries use. Knight (1994 as cited in Folse, 2004) indicated that dictionaries helped ESL students to learn more words and achieve a higher reading comprehension than students who did not use a bilingual dictionary. Other studies showed that low proficiency learners benefit from bilingual dictionary use more than intermediate and advanced learners who learn more from guessing vocabulary from context (Lupescu & Day, 1993 as cited in Folse, 2004); however, they also clarify meaning by using bilingual dictionaries.

Since intermediate and advanced ESL learners have acquired a large amount of L2 vocabulary, they might benefit from the use of monolingual dictionaries because when students look for more information to explain meaning, word definition will provide a wider information on the use of that word (Graves, 2006). However, studies done by Chun and Pass (1996), Knight (1994), Hulstijn (1993), Grace (1998), Hulstijn (1992), Laufer and Hulstijn (1998), Laufer and Shmuel (1997), and Prince (1995) have shown that the use of bilingual dictionaries improve vocabulary learning “then why not let students use a bilingual dictionary if they wish to do so?” (Folse, 2004, p. 120).

Graves (2006) stated that ESL students need to learn the use of computerized dictionaries and acknowledge their importance because e-dictionaries, thesaurus, synonyms, and word translation are useful for L2 vocabulary acquisition. Additionally, Collins COBUILD New Student’s Dictionary (2002) and Longman American Idioms Dictionary (1999) are great resources to be used by English language learners (Graves, 2006).

Tips for Mainstream and English as a Second Language Teachers

English learners who have a low level of vocabulary knowledge encounter many problems at school because “this deficit presents a major obstacle to achievement in critical areas such as reading comprehension” (August, Carlo, Dressler, & Snow, 2005; Garcia, 1991; August & Shanahan, 2006; Proctor, Carlo, August, & Snow, 2005; Saville-Troike, 1984; Snow & Kim, 2007 (as cited in Keme’enui & Baumann, 2012, p. 280). Therefore, teachers need to be aware that each ESL student will benefit from early instructional intervention in order to improve its vocabulary size and succeed at school. Consequently, students need to learn some important tips (bound morphemes, cognates, word families, searching for clues, rereading a text) that will facilitate recognizing new words while reading. Studies have proven that “training in guessing is worthwhile and deserves a reasonable investment of time and effort, not just a few sessions but small sustained attention to guessing” (Hafner, 1965 as cited in Nation, 2012, p. 370). Nation, (2012) stated that if teachers want their language learners understand the meaning of a text, that material must hold at least 95% of familiar words so that learners can be trained to guess the meaning of new words while reading.

1. Bound morphemes. Many languages are closely related because of their common origin, and studying their “cross-linguistic [relationship] and areal similarities in bound morphemes” provides ESL learners with a great source of information while inferring the meaning of unknown words while reading (Janhunnen, 2012 as cited in Keme’enui & Baumann, 2012, p. 23). Many languages, that have a common origin, borrowed bound morphemes deserve an explanation so that they can be easily understood. For instance, the “Russian suffix *-nyik* (as in *s-put-nyik* ‘co-road-ster’ = ‘travel companion’), transmitted into Finish as *-nieka* (as in *soito-nieka* ‘play-person’

= ‘musician’) and possible into English as *-nik* (as in *beat-nik*) ... The English suffix *-able* (as in *love-able*, functionally a passive potential participle: ‘that can be loved’), borrowed from Latin (*ama-bil-em*) and French (*aim-ble*).” (Janhunnen, 2012 as cited in Keme’enui & Baumann, 2012, p. 24).

2. Cognates. Words that match in form and function in two languages are known as cognates; however, there are words in the new language that look alike, but do not have the same meaning; therefore, learners need to be careful and able to recognize the false cognates by its meaning within a context (Janhunnen, 2012 as cited in Keme’enui & Baumann, 2012). For example, the English word *simple* is written exactly as *simple* in the Spanish language and they both mean the same. However, a Spanish speaking learner can translate the English word *embarrassed* as *embarazado* when it really means *avergonzado*.
3. Word families. Teaching not only the base word but the words that are related to it makes easier to identify the meaning of the other words, within its family. For instance, when teaching the word *indicate*, it is important to note that this word is part of a larger group of word tales such as: *indicate*, *indicated*, *indication*, and *indicator* (Keme’enui & Baumann, 2012).
4. Borrowed words. Many new words from other languages come to a language every day, and these are easy to determine because there is available linguistic and extra-linguistic information (Keme’enui & Baumann, 2012); thus, vocabulary such as *laptop*, *texting*, *sombrero*, *fiesta*, and *memes* will be understood by English and Spanish speakers.
5. Searching for clues. Language learners need to be conscious that reading in the new language is not an easy task because they have to focus on content and language. If mainstream and ESL teachers want their students to be successful at school, they need

to teach the right strategies that will drive learners to do well in their classrooms so that the students pay attention to different information presented in the text such as, pictures, titles, subtitles, bold and italic words, and the context itself.

6. Rereading a text. ESL learners can enjoy when reading a text, but also can they can get frustrated due to the lack of vocabulary knowledge which impedes to understand meaning. In this situation, rereading will provide with information that was lost in the first reading, and improve the understanding of the text.

Lesson Plans and Activities

Activity one: Reading for content and understanding vocabulary.

Instructions:

1. Read the text on *What is science?* twice. The first time you need to look for *high frequency words* (words that are repeated in the text), and underline them.
2. Make a chart with two columns and write a list of the ten most frequent words you found in the text, then count the words and, next to each word, write the number of times that word has been repeated in the text.
3. Then, read the list of words and write a checkmark next to the words you recognize, and an X next to the unknown word. Rewrite the list and rank the words in order of frequency (from high to low).
4. Reread the text, but this time you are going to read for understanding, if you find a word you do not understand, skip the word and continue reading, do not stop, try to infer its meaning. If you feel that knowing the meaning of that term is important to understand the meaning of the sentence, use a dictionary or ask a friend.

5. Go over the list again, check the unknown words and see if you can write its meaning, if not look it up in the dictionary or ask a peer.
6. Answer the question *What is science?* Explain your answer using at least five sentences. Write your answer using complete sentences.

“What is science?”

You probably have taken science class since you were in elementary school. But have you ever compared science to music, art, or math? **Science** is a body of knowledge based on the study of the natural world. There is science in almost everything we do. The nature, or essential characteristics, of science is scientific inquiry-the development of explanations. Scientific inquiry is both a creative process and a process rooted in unbiased observations and experimentation. When many people think of a scientist, they think of someone in a white lab coat working in a laboratory. Scientists work all over the world in many locations, such as the volcanic shown in **Figure 9**.

When enough evidence from many related investigations supports an idea, scientists consider that idea a **theory**-an explanation of a natural phenomenon supported by many observations and experiments over time. In biology, two of the most highly regarded theories are the cell theory and the theory of evolution. Both theories are based on countless observation investigations, have extensive supporting evidence, and enable biologists to make accurate predictions.

A scientific **law** describes relationships under certain conditions in nature. For example, the law of conservation of matter indicates that before and after a change the same amount of matter exists. The law does not explain why this occurs, but it describes the relationship between matter before a change and matter after a change. It is important to note that because they are fundamentally different, theories do not

become laws and laws do not become theories” (Reproduced from Glenco Biology, 2007, p. 11).

Activity two: Looking for cognates.

Remember that cognate words are easily recognized because their spelling is similar in both languages; however, there are some false cognates that can be discovered by checking their meaning within context.

Instructions:

1. Choose a text that you have recently read for pleasure that contained some words new to you. Reread on page and underline all the cognates you encounter.
2. Make a list, go over, and focus on the words you are not sure that you have the correct meaning.
3. Make a new list and look their meaning in a dictionary.
4. Write a summary about the reading and use in your writing as many cognate words as you can.

Activity three: Using a dictionary.

Looking up words in a dictionary can be boring; however, remember that learning a new language is a process that takes time and patience. Do not expect to learn the meaning of a word immediately, but every time you check its meaning, it will be a closer step to learning. Reread the information you have received in your last history class and underline the words you do not understand.

1. Choose between six and ten words that are important to understand about history and write them in your vocabulary notebook.

2. Then, using a dictionary (paper or e-dictionary) find the meaning of those words and write them with their corresponding translation.
3. Go over the new words, read aloud the English word and the corresponding translation.
4. Reread the information of your book again, and this time, you will probably recognize some words. Skip the words that are not important to understand the meaning of and refer to your notebook for the translation you really need to know to comprehend content, do not panic!
5. After reading, write, or speak out five thoughts that you understood, but do not forget to use the new words. Do not worry about the structure of the sentences, this activity is centered on communication.
6. You may text a friend or use a video call and tell her/him about what you have learned using this strategy. Do not forget to use the new vocabulary words!

Activity four: Using flash cards.

Remember that one of the best ways to learn vocabulary that you need to communicate inside or outside your classes is by using flash cards. You can use index cards or use the web.

Instructions:

1. Use index cards or go to <https://www.cram.com/> in order to create new flash cards.
2. Choose the words you need to learn.
3. Write the word or phrase on one side and the translation on the other.
4. You might use pictures, if possible.

5. Order the words according to their difficulty (from the hardest word to the easier)
6. After you go over the words, leave time before studying with the flash cards again.
7. When you memorize the meaning of the words, you can start using those words.
8. Start with small packs of words, and as you learn, increase the number of words to learn.
9. As you learn, keep changing the order of the word cards.
10. Say the word aloud or to yourself.
11. Use the word or phrase in a sentence that is related to any of the subject areas you take.
12. If possible, you might process the word by using affixes (prefix: -un, -ex, -bi; suffix: -tion, -ly, -able) (Nation, 2013).

Lesson Plan: English as a Second Language Class.

Skill: Vocabulary acquisition	Date: April 1, 2020
Learning Strategy: Recognizing word parts	
Learning Standards: Virginia language arts standards	
Learning targets: Use of the prefixes -un, -ex, and -bi to learn new words.	
Materials: Classroom textbook or favorite students' reading book	

Introductions: teaching students how to recognize the parts of a word is important because it will help them increase their vocabulary and, what is more important, understand meaning.	
Activity: Tell students to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read two to three pages looking for words that have the prefixes -un, -ex, and -bi. 2. Write down ten words. 3. Identify the suffix and write its meaning. 4. Students who have a low English knowledge can use their native language to explain the meaning of the word. 	
Progress Monitoring: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keep students' work on files to compare their progress. 	Accommodations/Modifications: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Modify material for language learners. 2. Graded reading books.

Lesson Plan: English as a Second Language.

Skill: The use of websites	Date: April 2, 2010
Learning Standard(s): Virginia language arts standards.	
Learning Targets: use websites to improve the new language skills.	
Materials: computer and internet.	

Introduction: teaching ESL students how to navigate on the web will provide a great resource to improve the new language skills.

Activity: make sure the students understand the instructions. Then ask them to ask to:

1. Go to the ESL website: On line English Practice-English for ESL and ELL Students and follow the link:
https://www.ixl.com/ela/topics?partner=bing&adGroup=Search%20-%20ELA%20-%20General%20-%20Mod%20Broad%20-%20US+ESL&partner=bing&adGroup=Search%20-%20ELA%20-%20General%20-%20Mod%20Broad%20-%20US+ESL&msslkid=7d15b64ccfcfla85c0afe8c9ce19cb56&utm_source=bing&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=Search%20-%20ELA%20-%20General%20-%20Mod%20Broad%20-%20US&utm_term=%20Besl&utm_content=ESL
2. At the top of the page, choose the **Language arts** option.
3. Choose your English grade level.
4. Click on the area you need to improve.
5. Click on **See all ... skills** (it depends on the grade language level you have).
6. Practice the activities in order, do not skip any activity (language is built from simple to complex).

Progress Monitoring:

Walk around the class to check for understanding.

Accommodations/Modifications:

Use of simple written language and the translation of unknown words.

English as a second language learners need to receive a student-centered instruction in order to improve their vocabulary level and language communication. Therefore, teachers need to invest time in teaching learners the right strategies that each one can apply, according to the personal need.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

In this thesis I reviewed the effect that vocabulary knowledge has in communication since people use words to interconnect to each other and to be able to understand written and spoken messages. Since English learners struggle at school because of lack of vocabulary knowledge which impedes ESL students to do well at school, I also explored the influence extensive reading has in helping L2 learners acquire the second language.

The information found in the second chapter referred to the importance that explicit instruction has for L2 learners in the process of acquiring the new language. Krashen's (1989) findings have suggested that the human mind learns a language in an unconscious way and that young children can learn more than two languages if they are exposed to them; however, during puberty, the mind loses that ability, and learning a language becomes more difficult. Therefore, older learners will benefit from the use of explicit vocabulary instruction and extensive reading to help them learn the new language.

Mainstream teachers are conscious that their students perform poorly at school because the language used in class is beyond their learners' English proficiency, obstructing successful understanding of content; however, most of the teachers continue teaching grammar and phonology as the main part of learning a language without realizing that the lack of vocabulary hinders communication and understanding of others. Teachers' awareness that vocabulary is the center of communication and the most important part of a language will help focus the instruction on explicit vocabulary in order to close the language gap and improve their students' performance within and outside the school environment.

Therefore, the teachers' task is to provide explicit vocabulary instruction to students that have low English proficiency so that they can acquire a vocabulary size that enables ESL students to communicate. Coady and Huckin (1997) suggested that a vocabulary size of

3,000-word families will benefit intermediate and advanced learners to acquire new words and understand content from extensive reading. Therefore, no students will succeed at school if they have a low level of vocabulary knowledge because they can neither communicate messages nor understand the content of the different subject areas.

The information that I have gathered on extensive reading and strategies to use to improve language acquisition is material that mainstream and ESL teachers need to know in order to plan activities that address learners needs, interests, and knowledge. Students will get motivated in extensive reading if they read graded books that they enjoy; also, reading material that refers to school content gain their attention because it provides extra information that will help them understand the area of study and succeed at school, as well as to add new words to their English language knowledge.

In addition, the teachers' job is to spend time teaching different strategies that aid students in the recognition of unknown words while reading. Showing learners how to recognize word parts, cognates, bound morphemes, context clues, word families are strategies that will help them infer the meaning of the word and become independent learners. When they feel that the guessed word does not fit the meaning, they may use bilingual dictionaries or ask a friend to clarify content.

The information provided in this project is written with the purpose to help mainstream teachers understand the importance that vocabulary has while using the language to communicate and understand content; therefore, educators' awareness related to knowing what words to teach, how to modify the class material, and what to provide related to graded language material will facilitate English language learning and improve their students' academic performance in class.

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